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AN INDIGNITY
TO
OUR CITIZEN SOLDIERS.

A Sermon

PREACHED IN THE FIRST PARISH CHURCH, CAMBRIDGE,
JUNE 1, 1890.

BY EDWARD H. HALL.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

GIVING STATISTICS OF PEACE DECISIONS AND REVERSALS.

CAMBRIDGE:
JOHN WILSON AND SON,
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JUL 12 1855

The Author

S E R M O N .

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. — JOHN, xv. 13.

THE memorial services which we have just been witnessing have a peculiar beauty of their own. They are in many respects the most interesting of our anniversaries. They bring back to us the hours of the country's peril, and of its new birth. They commemorate deeds of bravery and devotion which it is our joy and pride to recall. They break in upon our busy and calculating lives with inspiring memories of heroism and self-sacrifice. Long may the day keep its dignity and its charm!

But it will not, unless we guard it jealously. Even such hours, we must remember, may lose their sanctity, and the glowing eulogies we utter become an empty and hollow mockery. Let me confess at once that this danger seems to me very near. Let me confess that I feel a certain sense of depression even now, when I witness or take part in these observances, and that the honors which we pay to our departed heroes seem to me to contrast most painfully with the lack of honor paid them during the remainder of the year.

Let me explain; for the subject, unwelcome as it is, deserves the serious attention of all those who think our late war was worth the fighting or the cause for which we battled worth the sacrifice of such costly blood. My younger hearers will hardly know at first what I mean, and my older listeners may regret to have their tender memories disturbed by such unusual criticism; but if there ever was a time when a word of frank remonstrance was demanded, it is now. If we do not wish the ideals to which we have clung so long to be

rudely shattered and the conflict of quarter of a century ago to be robbed of its grandeur and made to appear like an unseemly scramble for spoils, it behooves us to pause in our present career.

When the war was over the soldier naturally became the object of the nation's gratitude. No kindness, no distinction, no generosity was too great to bestow upon him. No care was too tender, no provision too lavish, for those whom the war left maimed or disabled, or for the widows or orphans who were cast destitute upon the world. The nation adopted them all as her children. Hospitals arose, soldiers' homes sprang up, aid societies appeared on every hand, pension laws were eagerly enacted to cover every case of suffering or need. With characteristic munificence; we may even say with characteristic prodigality, provisions were made for the soldier and his family such as no nation had ever dreamed of before. While the compensation of both private soldiers and officers during the war, in direct pay, bounties, and rations, had been upon a scale of liberality unknown before in the military annals of the world, the legislation in their behalf since the war ended has been of the most thoughtful, considerate, and unstinted kind. Before ten years had passed, every possible injury or disease incurred in the service of the country seemed to be reached by the most generously worded provisions, while innumerable private bills had been passed from time to time to cover special cases of misfortune or want. To give single instances of the tender oversight which the nation was extending to those who had suffered in her behalf, the pension of the soldier who had died from wound or disease was given from the first to his widow, child, or dependent mother, or orphan sister (till sixteen); three years after the war \$2 a month was added for each child under sixteen; the amount for soldiers who had lost both hands was raised by three successive acts from \$25 (1864) to \$31 (1872), from \$31 to \$50 (1874), from \$50 to \$72 (1878). Had our pension legislation stopped abruptly ten years ago the families of all who had suffered in the war, from the lowest private to the highest general, would be drawing from the public treasury to-day an income which

would leave no just claim ungratified, and which, in any other country but America, would be considered princely.

It is true that such debts as the nation owes to its defenders cannot be measured in dollars and cents, and from this point of view any payments from the Treasury might be considered small; but it is also true that it cheapens the sentiment of patriotism to suggest that such debts can have a money value, or that the dollars received are intended as a full requital of the services rendered. Had this been the conception of the citizen's duty twenty-five or thirty years ago few youths would have left their homes for the battlefield, and there would have been few graves, day before yesterday, for our veterans to strew with flowers. Since wars began, the soldier has sought his highest reward in his own deeds of daring and self-sacrifice, and in his country's admiration and gratitude. A sad comment on our republic would it be that when her hour of peril came her defenders, for the first time in the world's history, had calculated the cost of their sacrifices before throwing themselves into the struggle; or had presented their bill of expenses when the struggle was over. Fortunately for us they did no such thing. As with all brave men who had gone before them, the victory of the cause for which they fought was their sufficient recompense; and the provisions for their welfare which the nation added afterwards were accepted with dignity and gratitude. Ten years ago the nation's generosity was fully appreciated, and if there were any murmurs of discontent it was not from the soldiers themselves. Nor, I think, could the world at large or even the most devoted friend of the soldier charge the nation with parsimony, when told that up to 1879, out of considerably less than three million soldiers, 398,294 pensions had been already granted, and nearly \$400,000,000 disbursed.

But, unfortunately, it was not the soldiers alone who thought themselves concerned in the matter. The making out of so many thousand claims and the expenditure of so many millions of dollars proved so lucrative a business, and the possibility of extending these claims in various directions proved so strong a temptation, that a great and thriving trade sprang up, based

upon the soldier's needs. Plenty of honest men there were, no doubt, among these pension agents, but outside this lesser circle was formed a far larger ring, whose sole thought was to awaken discontent among the recipients of pensions and bring to bear upon Congress a pressure, apparently from the people themselves, for an increase of the nation's liberal gratuities. The country was flooded with circulars and appeals, military societies were led on step by step to countenance these friendly efforts in their behalf, public sentiment was quietly and successfully played upon to sympathize with the soldier's sufferings and to forget that anything had yet been done to relieve him, politicians were reminded of the rich party capital to be secured by coming forward as the soldiers' friends, — until an entirely new era of pension legislation, unknown to the period of the war itself, began.

I should weary you to no purpose if I attempted to show the various steps of this scandalous process, but two instances will be enough to prove how demoralizing its influence has been both upon our national character and upon our national politics. In 1879, fourteen years after the war, a bill was introduced into Congress providing for what was innocently called the "arrears of pensions." When pensions were first granted it was naturally and properly provided that payment should begin when the application was made; unless made within a year, when payment was to date back to the time of discharge from the service. In two subsequent bills this time was generously extended, first to three years, then in 1868, to five, — it being considered that five years was ample time for any genuine claimant to discover his wounds or disability, and present his claims.

By the year 1879, however, this had been found to be a great wrong. No matter how late the soldier might be in applying for a pension, no matter though for fourteen years he had not regarded himself a fit subject for the nation's charity, or though for still another year he should keep off her list of beneficiaries, whenever he should secure a pension he should receive not the pension only, but back payments from the moment of discharge from the service. This applied

equally to pensions already granted. The passage of this bill was one of the most humiliating incidents of our political history, and marked, as nothing else could have done, the decline of public sentiment since the close of the war. I am not giving my own opinion alone. Three or four years before, a far less objectionable bill (Equalization of Bounties Bill) had been vetoed by President Grant as needlessly extravagant, as wholly uncalled for, as offering the most dangerous inducements to fraud, as not demanded by the soldiers themselves, and as not likely, if passed, to benefit them so much as the over-zealous agents who were the real authors of the movement. In 1879 the same arguments were offered against the bill for Arrears of Pensions, the Secretary of the Treasury gave warning that it would cost \$150,000,000, no whisper of a demand came from those who were supposed to need it; but it was pushed through almost without debate and with the slightest possible precautions against fraud. Instead of \$150,000,000 it cost the nation \$500,000,000.

The second instance is facing us to-day. The Act of 1879 has produced its anticipated results, and more. The recipients of that magnificent plunder — the agents I mean, not the soldiers — have shown themselves keener and keener for spoils so easily won; hardly a session of Congress, hardly a month of any session, has passed without some new pension bill; the safeguards once thought necessary to protect the soldiers' good name and save the Treasury from actual fraud have been gradually relaxed, so that certain classes of deserters (1882) have been granted pensions with the rest; the annual appropriation has risen from \$12,000,000 in 1866 and \$59,000,000 in 1886 to more than \$100,000,000 in 1890; we find ourselves in the extraordinary and even grotesque position to-day of paying in pensions to our former soldiers, more than any European nation pays for its standing army, and yet at this moment two bills are passing back and forth between the United States Senate and House, which, if adopted, will add 200,000 or 380,000 new names to the pension roll, and increase the annual expenditure by \$40,000,000 to \$80,000,000, or if certain pending amendments are adopted, by \$470,000,000.

What are these schemes which demand such an unparalleled outlay, and which, if carried through, will make all previous gifts to the soldiers seem parsimonious and pitiful? What new necessities have suddenly been discovered which the keen eye of all previous statesmanship had overlooked? Two, it seems, which these two bills, one in the Senate, the other in the House, are kindly calculated to meet. In the first place, it has been found that besides those soldiers who were wounded or disabled in actual service are many who came back to their homes strong and able-bodied, but who have broken down since then, or been unsuccessful in their affairs, or for some cause find themselves poorly off in the world, and so are told to look to their country to support them. Up to this time, in every land and among all nations, the soldier has been held to have no claim except for disabilities incurred in or resulting from actual service (at least until overtaken by extreme old age); now, however, this is regarded an unpardonable evasion of national responsibilities, and a measure is proposed whereby all who served three months in the War of the Rebellion, whether at the front, at the post of exposure, or not, and who have since, from any cause except vicious habits, become incapacitated for labor, and yet are dependent upon their daily labor, whether already receiving pensions or not, shall receive twelve dollars a month for life. If such soldier has died, or shall die, leaving dependent parents, they shall receive the same benefaction. Startling as this proposition is, and notwithstanding the same or a similar bill was vetoed three years ago, under a previous administration, as turning the pension roll from a roll of honor into a monstrous charity list, it has nevertheless (March 31, 1890) passed the present Senate with hardly a word in opposition, and but twelve votes against it.

But however extraordinary this removal of all distinction between heroic and non-heroic may seem, it becomes altogether innocent when compared with the sister measure which has already passed the United States House of Representatives. So open-handed has the nation been in its dealings, and so enormously has the number of its beneficiaries increased from year to year, that it has begun to seem to many quite invidious

to make any distinction at all. Why discriminate between the men who had the good fortune to receive wounds in the nation's service and those who had the bad fortune to come out without a scratch? Why withhold the nation's bounty so jealously from any who (whether for three years or for thirty days) figured in the national uniform? Why not treat all alike? Such, at least, seems to be the view of our legislators, as the bill to which I have alluded sweeps away at a stroke all cumbersome restrictions and enacts that any man who served in either army or navy, and has reached the age of sixty, shall receive eight dollars a month until his death. This ends, so far, the sorry tale. The two Houses are in conference as to which of the measures will please the soldiers most; but as thus far no backward step has been taken, and neither House and neither political party dares to seem less complaisant than the other, it is more than probable that they will extricate themselves from the perplexity by combining the two bills and retaining the most exorbitant provisions of each. Such at least seems to be the expectation of those who are in position to know, while the addition to our annual expenditures called for by such a compromise measure is variously estimated from \$50,000,000 to \$150,000,000 or \$200,000,000. In a word, if this deed is consummated, when this Congress adjourns we shall have pledged ourselves to a pension appropriation of at least \$150,000,000 a year; while out of the 2,800,000 men who served in the war, it is estimated that about 950,000, or one out of every three, will become recipients of the nation's charity.

And this measure, let me add, to make my statement complete, this measure which is now on the eve of consummation, this measure which increases three-fold the sum ten years ago thought a lavish appropriation for the country's defenders, this measure which removes the distinction between brave men and cowards and offers a splendid premium on pauperism, this measure which throws a dark cloud over the period of our national struggle, and makes its fine patriotism seem but a greedy rush for booty, is about to become a law without a single effort to defeat it, and with hardly a voice lifted against it.

A silence like that which fell upon the North fifty years ago whenever the encroachments of slavery were in question, falls upon the whole country to-day, whenever the subject of pensions arises. In the face of this monstrous wrong, this growing corruption, this blow at all that was purest and noblest in the only great war which our nation has undertaken, not a single public man of prominence (with one or two exceptions) utters a protest, neither party dares to record itself in opposition, the press is almost silent, while the pulpit passes it by for the most part as outside its sphere. So far as public utterances are concerned, the younger generation might grow up in absolute ignorance that as gross an indignity had been put upon our departed heroes, and as corrupting an influence introduced into our political life, as the history of our country records.

For this is not a mere question of figures or of dollars which I have brought to your attention this morning. The question is not whether our treasury can bear this stupendous and increasing drain; it is whether our national character can bear this constant assault upon its integrity and purity. Consider it first in the mere light of its extravagance. If extravagance in private affairs is one of the crying evils of the day, what shall we say of this gross extravagance in public affairs? If we have no right to waste our own property, how much worse is it when we waste the property of others? What harder blow could be struck at simplicity of living, or at the homely virtues of contentment and economy, than this reckless fashion of dissipating the public funds? One of the most significant features of the legislation of which I have been speaking is the free and easy way in which its advocates learn to speak of the expenditure of millions, and the growing audacity with which they allude to the cost of their schemes of plunder. Their ideas expand with their opportunities. At first \$10,000,000 seemed to them a mighty sum to spend upon pensions, but now a United States Senator, in advocating an amendment to the Dependent Bill, remarks with entire indifference that he "thought it very likely that the cost would reach \$600,000,000, and it might reach a billion." "It is time

to call a halt," he added, "on such low and selfish considerations as are raised against the payment of that debt."

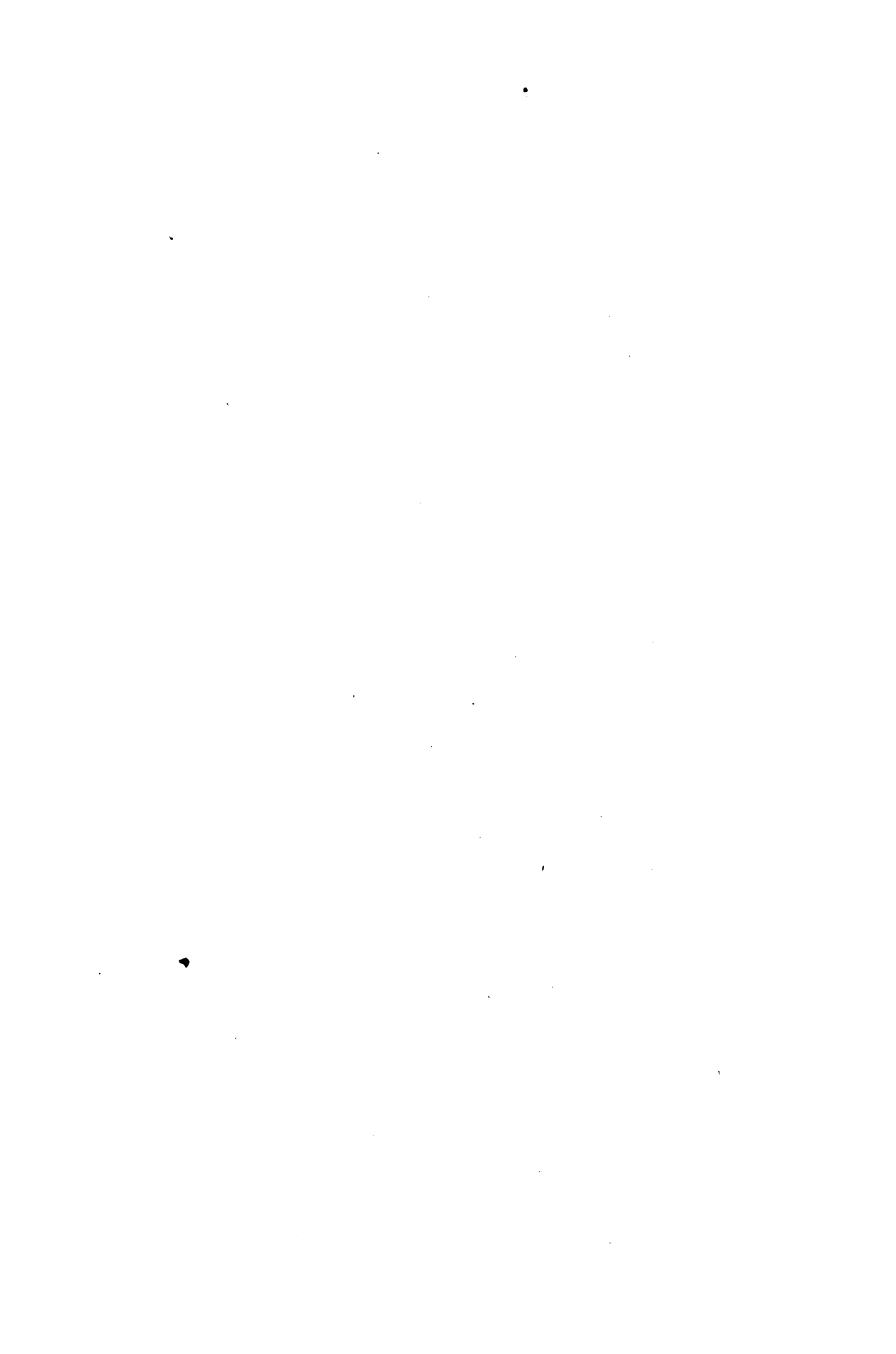
But turn from the legislators to the soldiers, whom this legislation is supposed to serve. One of the saddest spectacles which we have had to witness is the changed attitude and tone of the veterans of the war as these pension projects have advanced. At first they had nothing to do with the schemes and made no demands whatever. At first, indeed, they had to be sought out and urged to accept the public bounty. Between the first year of the war and the third (the first pension law being enacted in 1862) the number of applicants for State or national aid actually diminished. In 1865 the number was reported as "exceedingly small"—far smaller than public expectation or the actual preparations warranted. But from the moment of the enactment of the wholesale law for the payment of arrears in 1879 this dignified and self-respecting deportment was changed. Instead of expressing gratitude to the country for its unparalleled munificence, they began to urge claims for greater aid. Instead of waiting for others to extol their merits, they began to speak themselves of the debt the country owed them, and to allude threateningly to "the soldier vote." One step led to another, each more brazen and insolent than the last. Three years ago a committee of Congress was coolly told by a representative of the Grand Army of the Republic: "If you do not pass this bill (the 'Disability Bill') soon, you will have to pass a universal pension bill." At the National Encampment of the Grand Army, in 1888, it was "Resolved" (by a vote of 356 to 22) "That this Encampment favors the presentation of a bill to Congress which will give to every soldier, sailor, and marine who served in the army or navy of the United States between April 1861 and July 1865, for the period of *sixty* days or more, a service pension of \$8 per month, and to all who served a period exceeding 800 days an additional amount of one cent per day for each day's service exceeding that period." But within the last week the climax of this sort of effrontery seems to have been reached in a resolution passed by a Western encampment of the same order, to this effect: "We

now *demand* of the Congress of the United States a per diem service pension (*i. e.*, for every man in the service) pure and simple." Who could recognize under this guise the old ideal of the nation's patriotic citizen-soldier? And who can wonder, when these things are said and done, that the youth of the present generation are losing something of the admiration in which hitherto our citizen-soldiers have been held?

It is this last aspect of the case on which I wish especially to dwell. Those of us who know what the soldiers of the late war really were, and what their survivors for the most part still are, cannot bear to see their good repute so sadly endangered, or to have them judged by their least honorable representatives. Yet what else is to be hoped for if this downward path is to be continued? And what is to be expected of any class of citizens who find themselves, good and bad, idle and industrious alike, invited to look to the public bounty for their support? We are all trying in a small way to lessen the number of paupers in the country, and teach the dependent classes the inestimable lesson of self-respect and self-dependence. But what will our labors be worth with a class of paupers in every community whom our efforts cannot reach? The united endeavors of all the wisest philanthropists in all our cities to substitute self-support for beggary will be like sweeping back the waves of the ocean, so long as the nation itself is feeding a horde of hungry mendicants at the public table. In the name of the soldiers as a class, and of the community as a whole, let us protest against this mediæval policy.

I am sorry to have devoted this summer Sunday to such a lament; yet it has seemed to me an unavoidable duty, however remote the topic may be from our usual themes. Modern reformers, when they interfere with the working of public affairs, are apt to be called pessimistic. But if this is pessimism, it is the pessimism of simple facts, only half stated, which I have suffered, so far as possible, to speak for themselves. The pulpit is often charged with being vague and general in its denunciations, and dealing with sin in the abstract rather than with particular offences. I bring before

you this morning a very specific iniquity, and am much disappointed if I have not succeeded in describing it in the most definite terms which the English language affords. I am anxious to leave upon you the impression that the entire pension legislation of the last ten years is the most disreputable business in which an honorable nation could possibly engage; that it carries in itself all the elements of corruption, hypocrisy, and demoralization; that it is not called for by patriotism, by charity, or by statesmanship; that it is a burlesque upon statesmanship; that it is a libel upon charity; and that it strikes the most cruel blow at patriotism which that noble sentiment ever received. So far as its further encroachments are concerned we seem for the moment to be powerless; yet this makes it all the more important that the present inexplicable apathy should somehow be shaken; so that the beautiful anniversary which has just passed may resume once more its ancient charm, and we may be able to enter again, as tenderly as twenty-five years ago, into the pathos of the words: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."



APPENDIX.

I.

A BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PENSION LEGISLATION OF THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1861.

By the act of July 14, 1862, the total disability of officers and men in the service of the United States, caused by wounds, injuries, or disease contracted while in the line of duty, entitled them to monthly payments of money as specified according to their respective rank and grade, and their partial disability an amount proportionate to total disability in accordance with the adjudication of the Pension Office.

Officers of highest rank specified had \$30 a month.						
"	"	next	"	"	25	"
"	"	third	"	"	20	"
"	"	fourth	"	"	17	"
"	"	fifth	"	"	15	"
"	"	sixth	"	"	10	"
and all others				"	8	"

This system was gradually extended as follows:—

By the Act of July 4, 1864, the loss of both feet entitled the soldier or sailor to \$20 a month.

"	"	June 6, 1866, the loss of both feet or both hands or the sight of both eyes, or such permanent disability as rendered the soldier utterly helpless or so nearly so as to require the personal attendance of another person, \$25 a month.
"	"	June 8, 1872, this was increased to \$31.25 a month.
"	"	June 18, 1874 " " " \$50 "
"	"	June 17, 1878 " " " \$72 "
"	"	March 3, 1879, the totally blind were allowed \$72 a month.
"	"	Feb. 12, 1889, those losing both hands " \$100 "

For the loss of one foot *and* one hand, but not so much as to require personal attendance, by Act June 6, 1866, \$20 a month.

June 8, 1872. This was increased to \$24 a month.

Feb. 28, 1877. This was increased by giving for each hand and foot the highest sum allowed therefor by existing laws.

The loss of one hand or one foot or such inability to perform manual labor as was equivalent to loss of hand or foot was

By Act of June 6, 1866, made	\$15	a month.
" June 4, 1872, increased to	\$18	"
" March 3, 1883 "	\$24	"
" Aug. 4, 1886, where totally disabled in hand or in foot	\$30	"

By Act of June 4, 1872, for a leg amputated above the knee so that the soldier cannot use an artificial limb, \$24 a month.

By the same Act for the loss of hearing of both ears \$13 a month.

By the Act of Aug. 24, 1888 " " \$30 "

For loss of arm or leg by Act of June 18, 1874 . . . \$24 a month.

For arm and leg by Feb. 28, 1877 \$36 "

For either leg at hip-joint by March 8, 1879 \$37.50 "

" " " Aug. 4, 1886, increased to \$45 "

For loss of arm above the elbow or leg above the knee (by Act March 3, 1883), \$30 a month.

Increased by Act Aug. 4, 1886, to \$36 a month.

For loss of arm at shoulder joint \$37.50 a month.

Increased by Act of Aug. 4, 1886, to \$45 "

By Act of Aug. 15, 1876, artificial limbs are given once in five years to all who have lost limbs in the service of the United States.

By various Acts, July 14, 1862, March 3, 1865, and March 3, 1873, July 25, 1866, and July 27, 1868, widows of deceased soldiers and sailors were allowed the full pensions of pensioners "*totally disabled*," with \$2 additional for each child under sixteen years of age.

And by similar Acts the dependent relatives of the deceased in case of death without leaving a widow and children became partakers of the same pension.

By the Acts of Jan. 25, 1879, and March 3, 1879, arrearages were allowed so that in all cases pensioners could get pay for the years, months, and days prior to the time when the pension in each case was granted, and beginning with the day of the decease or discharge of the soldier as the case may be, thus granting unexpected and large sums of money to many who had been justly treated and needed no further assistance, and who often were injured by the receipt unexpectedly of such large sums of money. These laws with many others for the aid and support of many special classes of suffering pensioners have pushed the machinery of Government charity to a point beyond the expectations of all persons until recent years.

Furthermore such loose and ill-considered interpretations of rules have been made and allowed as to give lobbyists and pension agents every chance for plunder, while our National Soldiers' Homes are so ordered by Congress that some of the best superintendents find no chance to keep a proper discipline, no punishment that is effectual can be awarded, and the "bummer" element rules there as elsewhere.

II.

EXPENDITURES.

The following Table is taken from the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Pensions, for 1889.

Fiscal year ending June 30.	Total number of applications filed.	Total number of claims allowed.	Number of pensioners on the roll.			Disbursements.
			Invalids.	Widows, etc.	Total.	
1861.....			4,337	4,299	8,636	\$1,072,461.55
1862.....	2,487	462	4,341	3,818	8,159	790,384.76
1863.....	49,332	7,884	7,821	6,970	14,791	1,025,139.91
1864.....	53,599	39,487	23,479	27,656	51,135	4,504,616.92
1865.....	72,684	40,171	35,890	50,106	85,996	8,525,153.11
1866.....	65,256	50,177	55,652	71,070	126,722	13,459,996.43
1867.....	36,753	36,482	69,565	83,618	153,183	18,619,956.46
1868.....	20,768	28,921	75,957	93,686	169,643	24,010,981.99
1869.....	26,066	23,196	82,859	105,104	187,963	28,422,884.08
1870.....	24,851	18,221	87,521	111,165	198,686	27,780,811.81
1871.....	43,969	16,562	93,394	114,101	207,495	33,077,883.63
1872.....	26,391	34,833	113,954	118,275	232,229	30,169,241.00
1873.....	18,303	16,052	119,500	118,911	238,411	29,185,289.62
1874.....	16,734	10,462	121,628	114,613	236,241	30,593,749.56
1875.....	18,704	11,152	122,989	111,882	234,871	29,683,116.63
1876.....	23,523	9,977	124,239	107,898	232,137	28,351,399.69
1877.....	22,715	11,326	128,723	103,381	232,104	28,580,157.04
1878.....	44,537	11,962	131,649	92,349	223,998	26,844,415.18
1879.....	57,118	31,346	138,615	104,140	242,755	33,780,526.19
1880.....	141,466	19,545	145,410	105,392	250,802	57,240,540.14
1881.....	31,116	27,394	164,110	104,720	268,830	60,325,533.51
1882.....	40,939	27,664	182,633	103,064	285,697	64,295,230.54
1883.....	48,776	33,162	206,042	97,616	303,658	60,431,972.85
1884.....	41,735	34,192	225,470	97,286	322,756	57,273,536.74
1885.....	40,718	35,737	247,146	97,979	345,125	65,933,706.72
1886.....	49,895	40,857	270,346	95,437	365,783	64,564,270.45
1887.....	72,465	55,194	306,298	99,709	406,007	74,815,486.85
1888.....	75,726	60,252	343,701	108,856	452,557	79,646,146.37
1889.....	81,220	51,921	373,699	116,026	489,725	89,131,963.44
Total.....	1,248,146	789,121	\$1,062,218,413.17

From these figures, it appears that out of 789,121 pensioners whose claims have been allowed, 489,725 were still upon the rolls in June, 1889. Taking from these the pensioners of 1812 and of the Mexican War, there remained at that date 455,887 soldiers of the late war. The total expenditures for pensions up to that time, deducting the amounts paid for the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, were \$1,009,466,980.

The appropriation for pensions for 1889-1890 was \$98,427,641; but as deficiency bills covering \$25,321,907 have already been passed, the expenditures for the present fiscal year cannot be less than \$120,000,000.

It must be remembered, however, that this sum by no means represents the annual expenditure which will eventually be called for even under existing laws. According to the report already quoted, the number of applications still pending June, 1889, was 478,008. As the tables show that more than sixty per cent of claims presented are accepted, this means the addition, without further

legislation, of more than 286,000 to the pension-rolls. As the average annual value of each pension, according to the same authority, is \$131.18, this alone, supposing all these claims to be settled at once, would increase the annual expenditure by more than \$37,000,000. But as the number of applications, under present inducements, is by no means diminishing, but rather largely increasing, as the years pass, even this amount is not the highest already in sight. Turning once more to the same report, we find that the number of applications in 1888-1889, when no new bills had been passed, was 81,220, of which 51,921 were allowed. Between March 1 and June 30, the last four months of the fiscal year, as the late Commissioner announces with great pride, 85,000 new claims were presented. Taking now the average annual increase of applicants for the three years ending June, 1889, 76,470, and assuming, as we unfortunately may, that this will continue for some years to come, it is easy, even for the layman unaccustomed to congressional figures, to compute the ever-swelling list which confronts us. As 76,470 at \$131.18 gives upwards of \$10,000,000, we have: The first year \$137,000,000, the second \$147,000,000, the third \$157,000,000, and so on indefinitely, till the supply is exhausted.

But even this is not all. The amount distributed directly to the soldiers constitutes only a fraction, never estimated at over seventy-two per cent, of the entire appropriations. As the expenses of the Pension Bureau increase enormously with the increasing outlay, and as pensions already granted are themselves subject to constant increase and re-rating (in 1888-1889, 2,514 pensions were re-rated), it is evident that our present annual appropriation is but a tithe, even though no new pension bill is ever enacted, of what the country will by and by be called upon to pay. With these figures before us, it is quite possible to believe the appalling statement of an eminent member of Congress, Hon. J. C. Tarsney of Missouri, who said in a speech delivered in the House of Representatives, April 21, 1890: "The annual expenditure for pensions has not yet reached by any reasonable approximation one third of the maximum which it will reach under existing laws; and although there should not be an additional pension law passed, or an amendment to existing laws enacted, under the law as it exists and as it is administered the annual cost to the Government five years hence on account of pensions will almost as an absolute certainty exceed \$300,000,000." This he considers "a very conservative estimate."¹

For purposes of comparison, I append the following figures:—

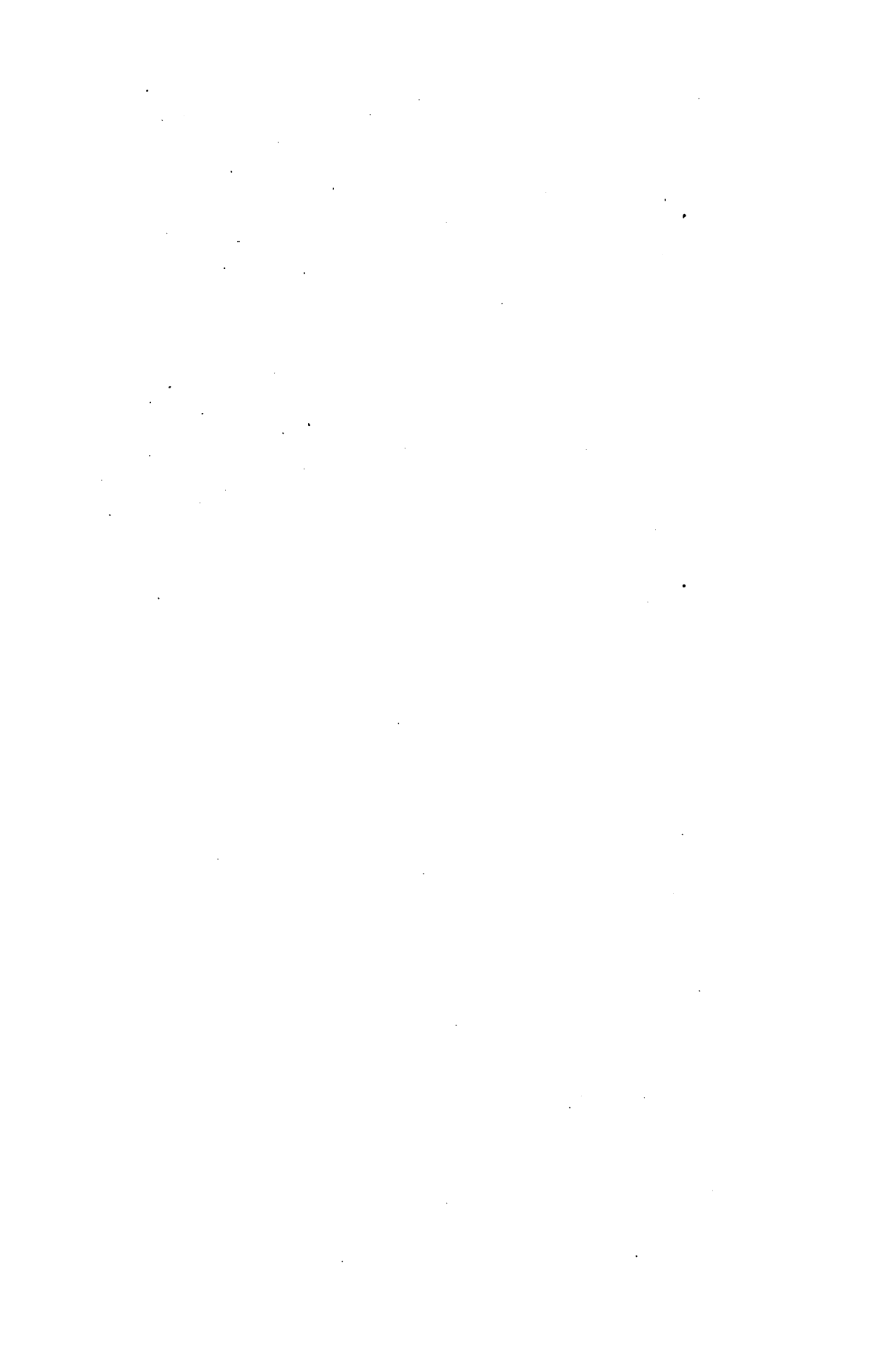
Annual appropriation for pensions five years hence . . .	\$300,000,000
Entire national expenses, 1888-1889, excluding sinking fund, but including pensions	281,996,615
Cost of German Army, 1889-1890	113,000,000
Cost of French Army, 1889	115,000,000

If the above statement as to the natural and inevitable increase of pension expenses seems extravagant, some idea of the reasons for it may be gained by glancing at the last report of the Commissioner of Pensions. The Commissioner, after proposing, in order to meet the "vast amount of labor incident to the pension agency service," that two new Agencies be added to the eighteen

¹ Since these calculations were made, the Dependent Pension Bill has been signed by the President, adding at least \$40,000,000 to the annual outlay.

now existing, and that "an appropriation for an increased force of three hundred clerks be asked for, and be made available at once," makes these among many other "recommendations:" That, to remove inequalities in rates, certain wounds now receiving only \$30 a month receive hereafter \$72; that the pension of \$30 now granted for loss of one hand or foot be granted for "diseases of the lungs, heart, or head;" that the pension of \$100 now granted for loss of both hands be granted henceforth for loss of both feet or eyes; that the pension of \$45 now granted for the loss of the arm at shoulder-joint, or the leg at hip-joint, be increased to \$50; that the pension of dependent father or mother, whenever granted, date back to the time of the soldier's death; that widows be granted pensions even though the death of the husband was unconnected with the service; that the pensions of minor children, now ceasing at sixteen, be continued later, if the child is physically disabled; that pensions be granted to army-nurses; that pensions be granted to all who, whether disabled or not, were "confined in confederate prisons." That some of these proposals seem natural and fair only emphasizes the point that the inevitable growth of the present system will involve us in quite as much outlay as the nation can bear, without a single additional law.

As an indication, however slight, of the proportion of our enormous appropriations which reaches the soldiers themselves, it is interesting to notice that this same Commissioner estimates the "aggregate annual value of pensions" at \$64,246,552. As the "total amount disbursed by agents" that year was \$89,181,968, this leaves \$25,000,000 which went somewhere else than into the soldier's pocket. One item of the twenty-five million appears to have been this: "Paid by the pension agents to attorneys for their services in the successful prosecution of claims before this Bureau, \$1,363,583."









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